

COUNTY OF HENRICO, VIRGINIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
SPECIAL MEETING
October 24, 2017

The Henrico County Board of Supervisors convened a special meeting on Tuesday, October 24, 2017, at 5:15 p.m., in the County Manager's Conference Room, Administration Building, Henrico County Government Center, Parham and Hungary Spring Roads, Henrico, Virginia.

Members of the Board Present:

Patricia S. O'Bannon, Chairman, Tuckahoe District
Frank J. Thornton, Vice Chairman, Fairfield District
Thomas M. Branin, Three Chopt District
Harvey L. Hinson, Brookland District
Tyrone E. Nelson, Varina District (*arrived at 5:52 p.m.*)

Other Officials Present:

John A. Vithoukas, County Manager
Joseph P. Rapisarda, Jr., County Attorney
Barry R. Lawrence, CMC, Assistant to the County Manager/Clerk to the Board
Tanya B. Harding, CMC, Deputy Clerk/Administrative Assistant
Timothy A. Foster, P.E., Deputy County Manager for Community Operations
W. Brandon Hinton, Deputy County Manager for Community Services
Douglas A. Middleton, Deputy County Manager for Public Safety
Anthony J. Romanello, Deputy County Manager for Administration
Randall R. Silber, Deputy County Manager for Community Development
C. Michael Schnurman, Jr., Legislative Liaison
Tamra R. McKinney, Director of Public Relations & Media Services

Mrs. O'Bannon called the meeting to order at 5:26 p.m.

Mr. Vithoukas briefly reviewed the items on the agenda for the special meeting.

Richmond Region Tourism Update

Mr. Vithoukas recognized Jack Berry, President and Chief Executive Officer of Richmond Region Tourism, and Katherine O'Donnell, Vice President of Community Relations for the organization. They distributed information packets containing several documents, including the organization's Fiscal Year 2016-17 annual report and 2017 visitors guide as well as the web link for its tourism ambassador training workshop and a flyer highlighting the Richmond Beer Trail. Mr. Berry narrated the first portion of a slide presentation titled *I Am Tourism*. He began by documenting the growth in hotel/motel sales during the past 30 years and identifying Henrico County as one of the top five tourism destinations in Virginia and as home to 50 percent of RVA's hotel rooms. Mr. Berry noted 32 percent of Henrico's meals tax is paid by visitors. He attributed the region's tourism success to equally-divided travel segments and happy customers, pointing out that 93 percent of the region's visitors plan to return, 59 percent within the same year. Mr. Berry mentioned recent national accolades and

top rankings the Richmond region has received for tourism from various publications and organizations.

Ms. O'Donnell narrated the second portion of the presentation. She noted Shagbark was named by USA Today as one of "20 new restaurants to try this fall" and pointed to the growing craft beer market in the region. Ms. O'Donnell cited sports tourism as the fastest growing tourism market in the Richmond region and explained how Henrico County's Greenwood Park, which is under development, will help the region attract top amateur sports tournaments. She also noted her organization's working relationship with the County's Division of Recreation and Parks. Ms. O'Donnell cited other regional attractions, such as the NASCAR events at Richmond International Raceway and Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden, and mentioned Richmond Region Tourism's ambassador program. She wrapped up the presentation with a video showcasing the region's growing culinary reputation.

In response to a question from Mrs. O'Bannon, Mr. Berry confirmed there is a need for more hotels in the region and explained that the highest occupancy rates are now on Saturday nights as opposed to Wednesday nights. Mr. Berry advised Mr. Thornton how he has been working with the region's public schools, colleges, and universities to promote tourism and career opportunities related to tourism. At Mr. Vithoukas' request, Mr. Berry elaborated on his organization's efforts to expand its footprint into smaller localities in the region, especially Charles City and New Kent Counties, and to take advantage of the Virginia Capital Trail. He explained for Mrs. O'Bannon why New Kent County may have an interest in joining Richmond Region Tourism.

The Board recessed at 5:52 p.m. and reconvened at 5:58 p.m.

New Tax Exemption for Certain Surviving Spouses of First Responders

Mr. Vithoukas recognized Andrew Newby, Assistant County Attorney, who narrated a slide presentation titled *New Tax Exemption Allowed by 2007 General Assembly Legislation – Surviving Spouses of First Responders*. Mr. Newby began by reminding the Board that Henrico citizens voted overwhelmingly in favor of a state constitutional amendment in the 2016 general election to exempt from taxation the real property of the surviving spouse of a first responder who was killed in the line of duty, where the surviving spouse occupies the real property as his or her principal place of residence and has not remarried. The General Assembly passed legislation in 2017 giving localities the option to provide this exemption by ordinance. Mr. Newby reviewed the scope of the exemption, noting the exemption would apply retroactively to January 1 if an ordinance is adopted by the Board. He identified the next steps moving forward, should the Board give its consensus, as an introduction of the ordinance on November 14 and public hearing on December 12. Mr. Newby clarified for Mr. Branin that local residents could qualify for the exemption even if their spouses had been employed outside Henrico. Mr. Vithoukas acknowledged the consensus of the Board was to move ahead with the ordinance.

2018 General Assembly Overview

Mr. Vithoukas reminded the Board it will be meeting with its General Assembly delegation in early November. He recognized Mr. Schnurman, who narrated a slide presentation on this item. Mr. Schnurman advised the Board that staff has worked with each County agency to identify issues they have faced over the course of the year and seek solutions to those issues.

This year, with the approval of the Board, staff wishes to request legislation relating to personal property tax valuations. Specifically, the legislation would grant the County the authority to create a separate data center classification for purposes of crafting depreciation schedules that reflect the unique attributes of data center operations. Mr. Schnurman pointed out data center facilities are significant revenue generators and require very little on the public service side.

Mr. Schnurman advised the Board that staff would also like to discuss the Line of Duty Act (LODA) with the County's legislative delegation. LODA was initially enacted in 1972 as a state-run program providing death benefits to the families of fallen public safety employees. Over the years, the General Assembly has expanded the act by adding new participants and has grown the program from a death benefit to a health care benefit for the members and their families. Through budget language, the General Assembly shifted the cost of the program to localities during the Great Recession. Mr. Schnurman reviewed the legislative history of House Bill 1345, which codified revisions to LODA from the Appropriations Act and made other changes, including transferring overall administration of LODA to the Virginia Retirement System and transferring administration of health insurance benefits under LODA to the Virginia Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM). Mr. Schnurman suggested the General Assembly keep all non-participating employer LODA funds in a "lockbox" to ensure they are used for expenses only, separate each employer's LODA funds so the employer is paying its fair share, require DHRM to report quarterly to employers on the status of the LODA fund, and establish a state LODA advisory commission with local government representation.

Mr. Schnurman concluded his presentation by giving the Board a preview of the calendar for the 2018 General Assembly Session and asking Board members if there were any other topics they would like to discuss. At Mr. Vithoukaskas' request, Mental Health & Developmental Services Director Laura Totty distributed information on a regional summit scheduled for October 26 at the Greater Richmond Convention Center and titled *Revive RVA: Regional Solutions to the Opioid Crisis*. In response to a question from Mrs. O'Bannon, Mr. Vithoukaskas and Ms. Totty elaborated on the need for additional treatment options on many levels to supplement same-day service. Mr. Vithoukaskas suggested it may be an appropriate time to have a conversation with legislators regarding this need without making a specific request. Ms. Totty confirmed for Mr. Branin that the General Assembly has been looking to shift the responsibility for and cost of treatment from the commonwealth to local governments. Mr. Vithoukaskas responded to additional questions and concerns raised by members of the Board on this topic. Mr. Thornton emphasized the importance of researching best practices and conveying this information to Henrico's legislative delegation with a strong and loud voice. Mr. Vithoukaskas acknowledged the importance of maintaining a direct and candid dialogue with the County's legislators on this and many other matters involving the shifting of costs from the commonwealth to localities.

Mr. Thornton voiced concern regarding a topic he suggested be added to the County's discussion with its legislators, grass cutting and maintenance of the medians and rights-of-way along state roads. He expressed frustration that grass is only being cut once a month and is reflecting poorly on the County because citizens do not understand this is a state responsibility. There was discussion of this topic by Board members, Mr. Vithoukaskas, Mr. Foster, and Mr. Schnurman and general agreement this has been a major problem throughout Henrico. Mr. Vithoukaskas confirmed he would add this topic to those being presented to the legislators at the November 8 special meeting.

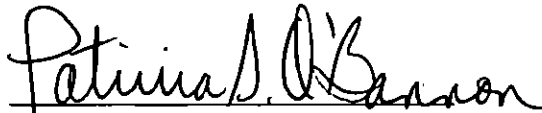
Mr. Thornton reiterated the need for localities to put strategies in place to address state regulations that are adversely affecting them and their citizens. Mr. Vithoukas advised the Board that the presentation to the legislators at the November 8 special meeting will be brief and confirmed information will be included on the opioid crisis and grass cutting along state roads.

Regular Meeting Agenda Items

Mr. Vithoukas reviewed the agenda for the 7:00 p.m. meeting. He pointed out there was one presentation item, a proclamation recognizing Adoption Month, and four public hearing items. At his request, Mr. Foster elaborated on the fourth public hearing item granting signatory authority for the conveyance of real estate at 5410 Williamsburg Road. Mr. Foster responded to a question from Mr. Nelson relating to the future use of the property. Mr. Vithoukas continued his review by advising the Board no citizens had signed up to speak during the public comment period and noting there were six items on the general agenda.

Mr. Thornton extended metaphorical flowers to Mr. Vithoukas, Mr. Foster, Public Works Director Steve Yob, and the Department of Public Works staff for ensuring the completion of sidewalk improvements on Colwyck Road near the Wal-Mart on Nine Mile Road, which made the sidewalks handicapped accessible.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:36 p.m.


Chairman, Board of Supervisors
Henrico County, Virginia